THE SOVERAIGNTY OF THE Grace of God,

IN THE

Beginning, Progreſs, and Perfection of Salvation in us.

IN A

SERMON

Formerly Preached at

S. *DUNSTAN'S* the *Weſt*,

Upon *PHIL.* 2. 13.

LONDON,

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Phil. 2. 13, *It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleaſure.*

THE Apoſtle in the former Verſe earneſtly preſſeth the *Philippians* to work out their own Salvation, to carry on the bleſſed beginnings of Grace to its final accompliſhment; and leſt they ſhould either preſume of their own ſtrength, or be careleſs in the proſecution of that which was their principal duty and intereſt, he preſcribes the manner how they muſt be converſant in that ſolemn work, *with fear and trembling:* That is,

First, with a profound *humility* from the ſenſe of their own weakneſs to perform the firſt Eſſayes, much leſs the more excellent acts of Religion in order to it.

Secondly, with ſerious *care*, leſt by neglect they ſhould diſpleaſe God, and fall ſhort of Salvation.

Theſe two are the inſeparable Qualifications of *Evangelical Obedience*, and are

oppoſite to Spiritual *pride*, which corrup
every ſervice that 'tis mixed with, an
to *carnal Security*, which makes us cold i
Religion, as if Salvation were eaſily ob
tained.

Now to inforce the Exhortation h
propounds an Argument moſt proper t
keep them humble and watchful, *For it i*
God that works in you of his good pleaſur
The foundation of Humility is that Go
is the Author of all our Spiritual good
and therefore the Glory of all is intirel
due to him; and ſince he freely aſſiſts u
by his Spirit, 'tis of infinite moment tha
we ſhould comply with his holy moti-
ons, leſt we forfeit his Grace, and pro-
voke him to withdraw from us. This re-
lation the words have to the 12*th.* Verſe
and the full ſenſe is contained in this *Pro-*
poſition, *That the beginning, progreſs and*
accompliſhment of Salvation in us, intirely
depends upon the free and powerful GRACE
of God.

In our Explication of it three things
are to be conſidered:

1. The *effect of Grace*, *To will and to do.*

2. The *action* by which 'tis produced, *God works it in us.*

3. The *Motive* from whence the Acti-

 on

on of God takes its riſe, *It is his good pleaſure.*

Firſt, *To will and to do*, compriſes in it the whole Spiritual work of a Chriſtian, in order to the obtaining of Salvation; both the firſt Converſion to God, wherein Grace prevents us, and Perſeverance in our Duty which crowns us: by the firſt we are tranſlated from darkneſs to light, by the ſecond, from a ſtate of imperfect light to that which is full and eternal. Particularly *to will* ſignifies the ſerious and ſtrong inclinations of the Will to Obedience, and *to do* the real performance of our univerſal Duty in ſuch a manner as the Goſpel accepts.

The Will is the principle of all Moral actions. As the fountain of Good or Evil is pure or polluted, ſo is whatever flows from it; and for this reaſon the iſſues of life and death are from the heart. Prov 4. 23
In this faculty Sin hath the ſeat of its Empire, and here Grace hath its Throne. Now the Will hath two ſorts of motions:

1. Weak incompleat and inconſtant deſires to a good propounded: and ſuch are in carnal and convinced perſons, who wiſh to die the death of the righteous, and take up faint and fleeting reſo-

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1. Weak incompleat and inconſtant deſires to a good propounded: and ſuch are in carnal and convinced perſons, who wiſh to die the death of the righteous, and take up faint and fleeting reſo-

lutions to mend their lives; but these not proceeding from the full bent of the heart are mutable and ineffective. The Apostle *James* tells us, *That a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.* Jam. 1. 8. There is a Combat between Conviction and Corruption in the heart; 'tis allured by the pleasures of Sin, which are present and sensible, and hath some desires of Salvation that is future and spiritual. And as a young Tree shaken by the wind inclines either way, as the force of the wind carries it; so according to the representations of one and the other the Soul is swayed.

(2) There are compleat and firm decrees of the Will which are attended with effects, and these are in true Believers. The reason of this diversity of dispositions in the Will is from the different apprehensions of the Mind, which is the guide of all its motions. The renewed mind is not throughly possest of the truth and goodness of things spiritual, and the Will is but imperfectly carried towards them; and since the terms upon which Salvation is offered are an intire denial of our selves, the parting with Life and all the Endearments of it, when the Glory

glory of God comes in competition with them, carnal perſons reſt only in their deſires without a real purſuit of it. The young man in the Goſpel, who addreſt himſelf to Chriſt with a deſire to obtain eternal happineſs, went away ſorrowful when he was commanded to ſell his Eſtate and give it to the poor: but when the underſtanding is fully convinced of the beauty and bleſſedneſs of the reward that is promiſed to Holineſs, the Will is fixt in its choice, and imbraces it with an inviolable affection, and from hence procedes ſerious and fervent endeavours to attain *the price of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.* The wiſe Merchant reſolved to part with all, that he might purchaſe the Pearl of ineſtimable price; for the Will is the firſt mover, and draws forth all the active powers for the acquiring of the ſupreme Good.

Secondly, The next enquiry is concerning the *Action*, whereby this is produced, *God works in us to will and to do.*

(1.) It is *Internal*, by the ſecret vertue of the holy Spirit, who enlightens the Mind, and inclines the Will to obey intirely Gods command. All outward means, whether the Works or Word of

God, ſingly conſidered are ineffectu
'Tis true the Divine Eſſence and Attribut
are apparent in their effects, the Eter
Power and Godhead are clearly ſeen fr
the Creation of the World. The Heave
and the Earth, and all things contained
them, are evident teſtimonies of the E
cellencies of their Author. The ſtrokes
the Creator's hand are engraven upon
his Works. In ſhort, the World repreſe
to us all thoſe Perfections that concur'd
the making of it, and as it inſtructs
that there is a God, ſo it invites us
love him who is infinitely good, and
obey him in whom Wiſdom and Pow
are united in their ſupreme degree: b
this diſcovery of God is rendered ineff
ctual by the obſtinacy of man in his co
rupt ſtate. And of this we have convinci
proof from the dreadful diſorders and co
ruptions in the Gentile-World; for no
withſtanding they were ſollicited by th
general benefits of Providence to repe
tance, yet they neither did know God
far as they might, nor honoured him
far as they knew, but continued in th
darkneſs of Idolatry, and were abandon
ed to the practice of luſts natural, an
unnatural with greedineſs; nay thoſe a
mongſ

mongſt them who pretended to be wiſe, were kept in their fooliſh bondage as well as the reſt. *Philoſophy* never made one believer: beſides, the preaching of the Goſpel, that is incomparably more clear and powerful than the ſilent Revelations by the Works of Creation and Providence, is intirely fruitleſs, if God doth not open the heart to receive it with meekneſs and ſubjection; and though Miracles are an infallible teſtimony from Heaven concerning the truth of a Doctrine, yet the performance of them is inſufficient to overcome the infidelity and obſtinacy of the heart; they may ſurprize and aſtoniſh the Spectator, but cannot without the enlightening, purifying, and healing Grace of the Spirit ever convert him. Although our Saviour ſpake as never man ſpake, and did thoſe works which never man did, yet the Phariſees were inconvincible; ſuch was their perverſneſs that they attributed the miraculous power of our Saviour to the Prince of Devils, rather than they would give Glory to God.

2. The Grace that works this obedient Will is *ſupernatural*, 'tis purchaſed by the meritorious ſufferings of the Redeemer, and conferred by ~~the Spirit~~

rit. The Grace of the Creator was given to *Adam*, and was alwaies preſent if he would make uſe of it; his diſcerning faculty was clear and free from any diſguiſing tincture; he ſaw God in himſelf as in a Sanctuary, and in the World as in a Temple, where his Preſence and Majeſty ſhined forth. He had a viſible Copy of Gods inviſible Beauty. This diſcovery produced in him a ſolemn Veneration of the Deity, and a ſuperlative delight in him. Now this Grace was left to the uſe of his natural faculties, without any extraordinary operations of Gods Spirit: but ſince man fell from his Original Innocence, and firſt Purity, ſuch is the darkneſs of the Mind, and the diſtemper of the affections, that till the Grace of the Redeemer ſupervenes, and repairs the ruins that Sin hath made, 'tis impoſſible to conceive a holy thought, or a ſincere and ardent deſire towards God; every Spiritual act requires a Supernatural power. The ſtate of Sin is deſcribed to be without ſtrength, and to be a ſtate of death; in which there is not only a ceſſation from vital acts, but an abſolute diſability to perform them.

3. Thirdly, this *Grace is effectual*, that

that exerciſe of power which overcomes all reſiſtance, and executes what it enterprizes. The *Greek* word ſignifies that action whereby a cauſe inſinuates it ſelf, and hath ſuch an influence upon its effect, as it indubitably follows. And 'tis uſed to expreſs the working power of Sin, and the tempting power of Satan in the unregenerate, which is alwaies prevalent. The Scripture ſets forth the efficacy of Divine Grace by the infinite power which wrought in the Creation, and in the Reſurrection of Chriſt, which is never fruſtrated of its effects. *We are created in Chriſt Jeſus to good works*; *and when we were dead in ſins we were quickened together with Chriſt.* Eph. 2. 10. Eph. 2. 1. So that the action of God in converting the Soul is not a naked and ſimple propoſing of Salvation, and the means to obtain it, or a *Moral ſuaſion* only to invite the accepting of it, and leaves the Will in ſuſpence to comply or not, but infallibly ſucceeds to aſſent. *Grace and Free-will* are not put in *joint-Commiſſion*, that the efficacy of the one depends upon the conſent of the other.

1. It diſparages Gods Providence, for it breaks the Eſſential ſubordination

on between the ſecond cauſes and the firſt Providence were imperfect, if the motions of the humane Will are without its power and government.

(2) It deſtroys his *Preſcience*, for how can he infallibly foreſee the motions of the Will, and the effects depending on them, which according to this ſuppoſition are always contingent, till the Will determines it ſelf; how can there be a certain knowledg of an uncertain event?

3. This Deifies the *Will*, and makes it ſupream and independent upon God himſelf: So that whereas the Apoſtle *James* tells us, that we ſhould expreſs, or in the reſignation of our ſpirits always intend, *That if the Lord will we will do this or that*, by a monſtrous contradiction the words ſhould be inverted, that the Lord will do this or that if man pleaſes.

Jam. 4. 15.

(4) It aboliſhes all *Prayer* and *Thanksgiving*; for if according to the different inclinations of the Will Grace is effectual or not, why ſhould we pray that God would turn us from evil, and incline us to good, or praiſe him for his diſcriminating Grace that ſeparates us from thoſe that periſh: 'Tis a vanity to thank him for

for that he hath not done, or to desire that he cannot do. In short, if we will preserve the Glory of his *Providence*, his *Prescience*, and his *Soveraignty*, if we will maintain the holy use of *Prayer* and *Praise*, which are the eminent respects of the Creature to the Creator, we must reject this proud error.

But it is *Objected*, That this insuperable efficacy of Grace ruins the Liberty of the Will. The unreasonableness of this will appear by considering,

First, True *Liberty* doth not consist in a peremptory indifferency to receive or reject any Object that is proposed; but in a *Judicious choice*, when the Soul is not led by a blind instinct as the Beasts, nor compelled by a foreign power, but embraces what it knows and approves to be best. Now God in his converting the Soul never prejudices that Liberty with which it is endowed; for although he works efficaciously, yet congruously to the reasonable nature, he doth by a strong Light convince the Mind of the Reality, Immensity and Immortality of the Reward, of the necessity and fitness of the means to be used for the obtaining of it, and thereby converts the Will,

which

which reſolving to have part in ſo rich
treaſure, excites the whole man to a v
gorous uſe of the means in order to it
and as the expreſſions of Scripture declar
the efficacy, ſo the ſweetneſs and conven
ency of Gods Operation. God draws
with the cords of a man, that is, by rat
onal Motives, he prevails over the ſtu
bornneſs of our Wills: And as G
draws moſt powerfully, ſo man comes
Chriſt moſt freely. He ſo works on t
Will as he no leſs works in it, and by t
imperate acts of it ſanctified and aſſiſt
by the Spirit, works Obedience. And t
efficacy of Grace is ſo far from violati
our Wills, that it enriches them; it mak
them to embrace God and Heaven, tho
Glorious and Eternal Objects, inſtead
periſhing and deſtructive Vanities; a
the Action of God which enables us mo
ardently and conſtantly to purſue theſe
our happineſs, increaſeth our freedom.
in Heaven, the ſtate of Glory, where
the full and conſtant light of the Mi
the Will is undeclinably bent to the S
preme Good, it enjoys the mo true a
perfect liberty.

Thirdly, The *Motive* that induces G
to work efficaciouſly in his Peo

is his *good pleaſure*. For the opening of this we muſt conſider the actions of God are of two ſorts:

Firſt, of ſome the reaſon is viſible in the ſubjects themſelves. Thus in the framing of the natural *Body* the *Eyes* are placed in the *Head* to conduct it, and be as Sentinels to diſcover danger; the *Heart* is in the midſt, being the fountain of Life to convey vital ſpirits equally to the members: And ſome operations that are of a more excellent nature, are exerciſed according to the ſubject. Thus that God hath made a connexion between Repentance and remiſſion of ſins, between perſeverance in obedience, and the rewards, the reaſon is clear; for if he ſhould juſtifie the impenitent, or glorifie an Apoſtate, it would reflect upon his Wiſdom, Holineſs and Juſtice. Now God will not rob one Attribute to enrich another, nor advance his Mercy to the prejudice of his other Perfections; that were to deny himſelf. But there are other free operations of God which have no other cauſe than his unaccountable Will; and of this ſort is the converſion of Sinners. The Scripture aſſigneth no other cauſes of it, but the mercy and good pleaſure of God. If we con-

ſider abſolutely thoſe who are recovered by Grace from their loſt and wretched ſtate, 'tis Mercy that ſaves them and unſpeakable compaſſion. If we conſider them as Elect and ſeparated from the periſhing World, 'tis the good pleaſure of God that makes the difference. Our Saviour acknowledgeth it as a piece of Divine Royalty, that the Lord of Heaven and Earth had hid the myſteries of the Goſpel from the wiſe and prudent, and had revealed them unto babes, *even ſo Father, for it ſeemeth good in thy ſight.* There is no cauſe of it but ~~that~~ ſupream Liberty ~~of his~~, which diſpenſes ſaving Grace as he pleaſes. The Apoſtle exemplifies this in *Jacob* and *Eſau*, who were conceived in the ſame moment, and ſprang from the ſame Parents, and were in all things equal, except that *Eſau* in the order of Birth was the Elder; yet God from his Soveraign pleaſure choſe one and paſt by the other; as he ſaith, *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.* He uſeth the ſame liberty as in the Creation, when of the ſame confuſed maſs he formed the Earth, the dregs of the Univerſe, and the Sun and Stars which are the Glory of the viſible World. This St. *Auſtin* calls the *Depth of the Croſs*; for the

the lower part of the Croſs is fixt in the Earth and unſeen by us, but the upper part is expoſed to our view; ſo the cauſes of Predeſtination are concealed in the breaſt of God, but the Effects of it in the Sanctification and Converſion of a Sinner are apparent to all. Neither doth this at all reflect upon the juſtice of God, that he beſtows unequal things upon equal perſons: for if we conſider God as an Owner, he may diſpoſe of his own Grace to whom he pleaſeth, but as a Judg he always diſpenſeth rewards and puniſhments at the laſt, according to the quality of the perſons. Thus at the day of Judgment the good works of Believers are produced as the Evidences of their Faith, and the Sins of the wicked as cauſes of their condemnation. It becomes us therefore with deep reverence to adore the incomprehenſible Counſels of God, conſidering he is the King Eternal and only wiſe God, and ſo hath uncontroulable power to diſpoſe of all things as he pleaſeth, and orders all things by moſt juſt reaſons though unknown to us. This ſhould chaſtiſe our vanity, who are deſirous to pry into the ſecrets of his Will.

That which Christ said to *Peter* is applicable in this place, *What I do thou knowest not now, but hereafter thou shalt know.* In the next life we shall understand that which is not lawful now to inquire into.

Use 1. First, from hence we learn to whom the honour of *converting Grace* is intirely due, to God who is the sole worker, and sole mover of himself to do it. He saves us by his own power, and is moved to it by his own mercy. There are no merits, no preparatory Dispositions which God foresaw that moved him to convert any. Nothing is primarily active but pure and unexcited mercy. Our Goodness is not the Motive of his Love, but his Love the cause of our Goodness. When God chose *Israel* from the rest of the Nations to be his people, there was no reason of this Election but the sole pleasure of God; for they were all equal in their Creation. They descended from the same *Adam*, and equal in their fall; there was no transcendent good in them above others, nor excess of evil in other Nations above them, but free Grace alone prefer'd

er'd them; and if converted persons seriously reflect upon their unregenerate state, they will find that by original and contracted Corruption they were as unworthy and as obstinate as others. If admirable Grace had not been exercised in them, they had been no better than the rest; and the same Almighty mercy could soften the most obdurate. How then should this endear God to us? How can we reflect upon this free and powerful Grace of God without a rapture of Soul? We are plunged into the same misery with the most forsaken Sinners, and he extended from Heaven that hand whereby he created the World, and raised Christ from the dead to recover us. It is an inseparable quality of Grace to be special, it is the singular favour of God to his people, and this should magnifie it in our esteem.

Use 2. From hence we may discover whether we have the blessed effects of Gods good pleasure in us, if there be deep desires and serious endeavours to obey him, these are the solid and convincing Evidences, that his Eternal Love hath chosen us. Many unrenewed persons either constrained

by the terrors of the Word, or ~~the~~ ~~merits of~~ outward afflictions, reſolve
live better; but their promiſes are
built on permanent principles. And wh
ſome agreeable Temptation preſents it ſe
they cannot reſiſt its charmes, but repe
of their reſolutions, and return to the
old luſts, with new affections. How c
ſuch perſons without trembling feel t
Devil to be-maſter of their Wills and A
fections, where he works ſo powerfull
as in the Children of diſobedience? An
others who are more temperate and ſobe
and make a profeſſion of Godlineſs, y
are deſtitute of this Omnipotent Grace
They content themſelves with wiſhe
and languid luke-warm endeavour
to obey God. They love mediocrities i
Religion, but its purity and perfectio
they are not reconciled to. How can w
believe that inſincere and inconſtant re
ſolutions, that ſlight and ineffectual at
tempts to do our duty, are the product o
ſaving Grace, and an argument that God
hath ſet his Love upon us? Doth the A
poſtle uſe theſe magnificent and vaſty ex
preſſions, concerning the exceeding great
neſs of the Divine Power that worketh
mightily in thoſe that believe, as it
wrought

wrought in Chriſt in raiſing him from the dead, and ſetting him at the right hand of God, to ſignifie velleities and faint deſires to be good, or ſuch vain and fruitleſs endeavours, as of one in a Palſie; who trys to move his hand, but when he attempts to raiſe it up, the natural weight and weakneſs keeps it down. No; God never ſet his love on any perſon, and exerciſed that power which was neceſſary to regenerate and raiſe him, but the ſubject is renewed and raiſed. Though a legion of impure luſts have poſſeſſion of the ſoul, yet Grace will be victorious; it overcomes every high thought and rebellious paſſion; it hath an inſuperable and infallible efficacy. The Will is totally, fixedly, and unreſervedly engaged in the ſervice of God, for this Grace is always ſucceſsful. In other things foreign materials may be requiſite to produce the effect: But in Religion, when the act of the Will is full and abſolute, it is ſufficient; the Apoſtle ſaith, *all that will live godly*, to deſcribe thoſe that do really live ſo.

Uſe 3. From hence we may infer the certainty of a Believers Perſeverance; it is ſecured by the efficacy of Divine Grace,

and by the good pleaſure of God.

1. The efficacy of Divine Grace will make them victorious over all oppoſition in the way to Heaven. This Supernatural aſſiſtance was not beſtowed upon Man in Paradiſe, the principle of Holineſs was in himſelf; he had a power to obey if he would, but not actually to determine his Will, for then he had never fallen: but the principle of Evangelical Grace is in Chriſt as our head, and is conveyed from him to all his members, and inclines the Will ſo powerfully, that it is made ſubject to it. God works in us *to will and to do: I will put my ſpirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my Statutes, and you ſhall keep my Commandments and do them,* ſaith the Lord by the Prophet. He gave his Son to *die* for us, and his Spirit to *live* in us, and all the faculties are ſubordinate to his bleſſed motions. And whereas the inſtability of the humane Spirit by reaſon of remanent corruption, and the ſtrength of temptations, may excite our fear, leſt we ſhould fall ſhort of Heaven, the Grace of God ſecures againſt both.

(1) Though whilſt we are in the preſent ſtate, our Corruption is not perfectly

fectly healed, but there are ſome remains which like a Gangrene threaten to ſeize on the vital parts, wherein the Spiritual life is ſeated; yet the Divine Nature, that is communicated to all that ſpiritually deſcend from Chriſt, is active and powerful to reſiſt all carnal deſires, and will prevail in the end: for if ſin in its full vigour could not controul the efficacy of converting Grace, how can the reliques of it, when Grace hath taken poſſeſſion, be ſtrong enough to ſpoil it of its conqueſt? There is a greater diſtance from death to life, than from life to action. That Omnipotent Grace that viſits us in the Grave, and reſtores life to the dead, can perpetuate it to the living; that which was ſo powerful as to pluck the heart of ſtone out of the breaſt, can preſerve the heart of fleſh. It is true, the Grace given to a Believer is in its own nature a periſhing quality; but as it was firſt infuſed, ſo it is daily revived by the holy Spirit; he is a living, reigning principle in the Saints; he confirmes their Faith, inflames their Love, and refreſhes in their minds the Idea's of that Glory that is future, he leads them ſafely to felicity.

2. The Temptations to which we are exposed, seem to endanger our standing; they are various, some pleasant and insinuating, others sharp and furious, and are managed by the Devil, our subtil and industrious enemy, to undermine, or by open battery to overthrow us. And how difficult is it for the Soul whilst united to flesh, to resist the charms of what is amiable, or to endure the assaults of what is terrible to sense? But the renewed Christian hath no reason to be terrified with disquieting fears, that any sinful Temptation can befall him, which notwithstanding his watchfulness may overcome him irrecoverably. For all Temptations are external, and have no power over our spirits but what we give them; a voluntary resistance secures the victory to us. The Apostle tells us, *Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world*, God is stronger not only in himself, but as working in us by the vigorous assistance of his Grace, to confirm us, than the Devil assisted with all the delights and terrors of the World, and taking advantage of that remaining concupiscence, which is not extinguished, is to corrupt and destroy us. Briefly, unless there be a

Power

Power above what is infinite, Believers ſhall be preſerved from final Apoſtacy. Our Saviour tells us, *his Father is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of his hands*; that is an inviolable *Sanctuary*. If it were only by the ſtrength of natural Reaſon, or courage, that we are to overcome Temptations, ſome might be ſo violent as to make the ſtrongeſt to faint and fall away; but ſince the Divine Power ſupports us, it will make the weakeſt victorious, for the Grace of God makes us ſtrong, and is not made weak by us.

(2) The good pleaſure of God, which is the ſole motive of his working in a Believer, is a ſtrong Motive that they ſhall perſevere, for God is as unchangeable in his Will as in his Nature; his Almighty power and unvariable Will prevent their periſhing; his Love is the cauſe of Election, from whence there can be no ſeparation; his Gifts are without repentance, and how can we juſtly fear that he will alter his affection? he that prevented them in his mercy, when they were in their pollutions, will he leave them when his Image is engraven upon them? He that loved them ſo as to unite them to his Son, when

when they were enemies, will he hate them when they are his Members? No; his loving kindneſs is everlaſting, and the Covenant that is built upon it is more firm than the Pillars of Heaven, and the foundations of the Earth. This ſupported *David* in his dying hour, that God had made with him *an everlaſting Covenant in all things well-ordered and ſure*, for that was all his Salvation. And the Apoſtle challenges all Creatures in Heaven and Earth, with a full and ſtrong perſwaſion, that nothing could ſeparate between Believers and their Happineſs. *For I am perſwaded, that neither death nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the Love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* This Aſſurance is not built on any ſpecial prerogative he had. It was not his rapture into Paradiſe, nor Revelations, but that which is common to the loweſt Believer with the higheſt Apoſtle. The Love of God declared in the Word, and ſhed abroad in their hearts, that filled them with this triumphant confidence.

Uſe 4

Uſe 4. Let us be excited from the conſideration of the Supernatural and Efficacious aſſiſtance of God, *to work out our own Salvation* with fear and trembling. *For the working of the Spirit doth not ſuperſede our own endeavours.* In Converſion Gods works on us as Objects, afterwards he works by us as Inſtruments. The power whereby we act in Religion is God's, but the action is ours; 'tis man repents, and believes, and obeys. As the Earth which is cold and dry in its natural conſtitution, and if left to it ſelf would be barren for ever, when the Influences of the Heavens deſcend on it, brings forth fruit; ſo by the beams of the Sun of Righteouſneſs, Chriſtians are made fruitful, but that they may bring forth fruit worthy of Repentance, there muſt be a concurrence of our Endeavours: we are living ſtones after Converſion, not dead and paſſive as before, and we ſhould with the moſt ardent Affections work out our Salvation. We ſhould not content our ſelves with Hypocrities in Religion, but labour to be Holy as God is Holy. A Chriſtian ſhould alway be preſſing forward, and the nearer he comes to Salvation his tendency ſhould be the more earneſt. O let us keep our

Souls

Souls alwaies intent upon this Divi
work! & whilſt carnal perſons waſte the
time in a miſerable exerciſe of their labo
rious vanities, let us viſit this work eve
ry Morning, and review it every Evenin
let us eſteem every day loſt wherein w
have not advanced a ſtep toward Heave
Let not the buſineſs or pleaſures of th
World divert us, for that can be no goo
excuſe where Salvation is concerned. An
for the carrying on this happy work, le
us go to Heaven for ſtrength. The gene
ral Providence of God is required for th
performing of natural actions, much mo
is a Divine Power neceſſary for Superna
tural; not only the firſt Grace, but all th
advances of the Spiritual life are fro
God. As the Sun draws forth the Sap in
to flouriſhing and fruitfulneſs, ſo the actu
al help of the Spirit revives our habitua
Grace, and enables us to perform wha
we deſire. Let us have continual recourſe
to God by Prayer, and unite Diffidence
in our ſelves with Dependence upon him
It is by ſupplies from him that we do any
thing acceptably. There is nothing ſpiri
tually good, though never ſo ſmall, or ne
ver ſo great, but proceeds from him. All
the pretended forces of *Free-will* are fi

ctions
our ſp
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periſh

ctions

ctions and ſhadows. Our combat with our ſpiritual enemies, our victory over them, and our triumph, are to be aſcribed to Grace. It is Grace that brings us out of *Egypt*, that preſerves us in the Wilderneſs, and that leads us into Canaan. In ſhort, it is *Grace* that enables us to work, and rewards us for working. Neither doth this excuſe men in their unregenerate ſtate, who by voluntary chains are bound in their woful captivity, and cannot move one ſtep towards Heaven. For to ſpeak ſtrictly, it is not Gods withholding Grace that is the cauſe of their ruin, but it is their own enmity and rebellion; they love thoſe luſts whereby they are inſnared, and hate the Grace that ſhould reſcue them. They are weak and wicked, their impotency lies in their obſtinacy. It is true, God juſtly leaves them, and their damnation is a neceſſary conſequent, yet it is without any operation of God. For although the Divine Power is neceſſary to give life to a dead body, yet a carcaſs that is deprived of life, will putrifie of it ſelf from that principle of Corruption that is in it. So Grace is neceſſary for Salvation, but the wicked periſh from the principles of Luſt within them,

them; and at laſt the Conſcience of th
Reprobates will confirm the ſevereſt co
demnation againſt them.

Let us therefore in the ſenſe of our u
ter diſability, addreſs our ſelves to t
God of all Grace, that our ſtrength m
be renewed every hour; and let us wi
a holy fear be diligent to improve all t
Divine aſſiſtance he affords us. Let us n
grieve the bleſſed Spirit by quenching h
motions: how often doth he approa
the Soul and find it careleſs and negle
ful, as our Saviour came thrice to h
Diſciples, and found them aſleep? Chr
was awake to come and ſpeak to them
the moſt tender and melting manner, *co*
you not watch with me one hour? but th
were not vigilant to receive him. T
holy Spirit blows where he pleaſeth, w
cannot command his free operation. Let
therefore cheriſh all his motions, t
Grace attain to its perfection; and th
we may perſevere with a holy fervo
and diligence, conſider the certain ſho
neſs, and uncertain continuance of li
it is but a ſpan long. And if we co
reach the life of *Methuſelah*, it were ſh
enough to prepare for Eternity. Conſid
the ſerioufneſs of our work, it requi
o

ir beſt time, ſtrength and affections; and onſider the reward, it is our own Salva-on. None ſhall appear before Gods Tri-nal by a Proxy, but every one in his wn perſon ſhall receive either a joyful or ſad ſentence. Briefly, it is Salvation at is the recompence of perſevering O-dience. And how admirable that is we ay underſtand, if we conſider it is the oſt eminent gift of God, (whoſe Riches e anſwerable to his Greatneſs,) to s Favourites whom he loved before the orld was made; it is anſwerable to that ered Treaſure that was given for it, the lood of the *Son of God*, and the Bleſſed-ſs of the Redeemed is the Redeemers compence for all his meritorious ſuffer-gs. It is a ſtate of *Glory* and *Joy*. The lory of it is ſuch that all the Kingdoms the World in all their ſplendor, are no re to it than a dead ſpark to the Sun its brighteſt luſter: The joy of it is ſo ll that a thouſand years there is but as e day; it is a ſtate of Triumphant fe-ity; and all this Happineſs is ſet off by e contrary ſtate which ſhall be the por-n of thoſe who deſpiſe it. *How ſhall eſcape if we neglect ſo great Salvati-*! The uninſtructed Heathens that never heard

heard of a Saviour, nor were acqu
with the ſecrets of another World,
have a cooler climate in Hell than
who refuſe Heaven, when it is offe
them upon ſuch gracious and reaſ
termes. And how juſt is it that
whom the moſt bleſſed hope cannot
nor the moſt dreadful terrors affrig
they will hazard the loſs of the one
expoſe themſelves to the ſuffering o
other, for the pleaſures of Sin whic
but for a ſeaſon; how juſt is, it tha
perſons ſhould enjoy their own o
and inherit their own choice, that i
ſery intolerable and eternal?

FINIS.